

Decision Memo

Spruce East Temporary Road

U.S. Forest Service

**Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests &
Thunder Basin National Grasslands
Laramie Ranger District
Albany County, Wyoming**

Project ID # 57125

PROJECT AREA:

The Spruce East Temporary Road Project area is located on the Laramie Ranger District of the Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests and Thunder Basin National Grassland in Albany County, Wyoming, approximately 45 miles west of Laramie, located in portions of section 34, T13N R79W, 6th P.M.

DECISION

I have decided to implement the following proposed action based on the purpose and need described below.

PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of the project is to provide access to a timber harvest unit that is covered under Spruce Gulch EIS. The need for the project arises from the originally planned temporary road location being too steep for temporary road construction.

PROPOSED ACTION

The Spruce East Temporary Road Project includes the construction, use of, and obliteration after use of a temporary road that is approximately 1,100 feet in length or about 0.5 acres of disturbance. Resource specialist reviewed an 8.4-acre area and found no resource concerns or extraordinary circumstances and recommended no mitigations. The road will be constructed and obliterated in accordance with the Spruce Gulch EIS design elements and standard timber sale contract provisions. Although most of the area has been previously disturbed by hazard tree removal, some trees of varying sizes, species, and ages may need to be cut in order to allow for the construction of the road.

RATIONALE FOR DECISION

This activity falls within a category of actions which normally do not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment and, therefore, may be categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental impact statement or environmental assessment. This category of actions is identified in 36 CFR 220.6(e)(13), *Salvage of dead and/or dying trees not to exceed 250 acres, requiring no more*

than 1/2 mile of temporary road construction. The proposed action may include incidental removal of live or dead trees for landings, skid trails, and road clearing.

This type of action is applicable because the project meets all the required criteria. Therefore, I am categorically excluding the described project from documentation in an environmental impact statement or environmental assessment.

Review of Extraordinary Circumstances

I find that there are no extraordinary circumstances that would warrant further analysis and documentation in an environmental impact statement or environmental assessment. I took into account resource conditions identified in agency procedures that should be considered in determining whether extraordinary circumstances might exist, including:

- Federally listed threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat, species proposed for Federal listing or proposed critical habitat--**No effect**-none present in project area.
- Forest Service sensitive species – **No effect**- none present in project area.
- Flood plains, wetlands, or municipal watersheds – **No effect**-none present in the project area.
- Congressionally designated areas such as wilderness, wilderness study areas, or national recreation areas – **No effect** – none present in the project area.
- Inventoried roadless areas, potential wilderness areas, or research natural areas – **No effect**-none present in the project area.
- American Indians religious or cultural sites, archaeological sites, or historic properties or areas – **No effect** – none present in the project area.

INTERESTED AND AFFECTED AGENCIES, ORGANIZATIONS, TRIBES, AND PERSONS CONTACTED AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The project was posted on the SOPA November 6th and x comments were received.

The project is located in an area previously disturbed during roadside hazard tree treatments that was scoped widely, due to this overlap and the nature of this project, I scoped to Forest Service specialists who had no concerns.

FINDINGS REQUIRED BY OTHER LAWS AND CONSISTENCY WITH LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN

National Forest Management Act

This project is consistent with the Medicine Bow National Forest Land Management Plan (2003), including direction for the Upper Douglas Creek Geographic Area and Management Area 5.15- (Forest Products-Ecological Maintenance and Restoration considering the Historic Range of Variability). The project location was subject to interdisciplinary review and areas of concern were avoided.

Endangered Species Act (ESA)

No federally listed threatened or endangered species, or critical habitat occurs in the project area.



Wyoming State Water Quality Standards and Clean Water Act (CWA)

NPDES permits for logging roads are not necessary; however, any other necessary permits will be obtained prior to implementation. The resource protection measures for Soils, Hydrology and Aquatics, outlined in the Design Elements section, will protect water quality. Thus, the project consistent with these regulatory requirements.

National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)

Heritage resource survey will be completed for all areas where activities are proposed or where other project-related disturbance may occur. Adverse effects to historic properties will be avoided through design elements. No change in the proposal is required. Per the 2009 (Amended 2014) Programmatic Agreement among the WY USFS, WY SHPO and the ACHP Regarding Compliance with the NHPA, Stipulation IV.G, project notification will be sent to SHPO prior to project implementation. No concurrence from SHPO is required because this project will have No Adverse Effect on historic sites. If any cultural materials are discovered during construction, work in the area shall halt immediately, the federal agency and SHPO staff contacted, and the materials evaluated by an archaeologist or historian meeting the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards (48 FR 22716, Sept. 1983).

OBJECTION OPPORTUNITIES

Decisions that are categorically excluded from documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) are not subject to an administrative review process (pre-decisional objection process) (Agriculture Act of 2014, Subtitle A, Sec. 8006).

IMPLEMENTATION DATE

The project may start immediately, however implementation isn't likely to begin until Spring of 2020.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT

For additional information concerning this decision, contact: frank.e.romero@usda.gov or (307) 745-2300.

Frank E. Romero
District Ranger

Date



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